

Assembly Speaker pro Tempore
Christine Kehoe
Chair

Senator Sheila James Kuehl
Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg
Assemblymember John Laird
Assemblymember Mark Leno



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GOVERNOR GRAY DAVIS APPROVES **HISTORIC DOMESTIC PARTNERS LEGISLATION**

Sacramento -- Governor Gray Davis on Friday night signed into law a landmark measure that would provide significant rights and responsibilities to registered domestic partners in California. AB 205, by Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg (D - Los Angeles), would grant registered domestic partners nearly all the state rights, benefits, and responsibilities currently granted only to spouses under state law.

The bill signing ceremony was held at the San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Community Center. With the Governor was the bill's lead author, Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg and other joint authors including Assemblymembers Paul Koretz (D - West Hollywood) and Mark Leno (D - San Francisco). Also in attendance were State Board of Equalization Chairwoman Carole Migden, Senator Jackie Speier, Assemblymember Sally Lieber, Geoff Kors of Equality California, the bill's sponsor, and representatives of various organizations from the local, state, and national level.

"AB 205 takes an important step forward toward equality by providing domestic partners with more rights, and more importantly, responsibilities," said Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg. "I commend Governor Gray Davis for standing up for equal rights. With the signing of AB 205, we are moving our state forward in the area of human rights."

"It was a historic day not only for LGBT Californians, but for all fair-minded people across this great state," stated Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Christine Kehoe (D - San Diego), chair of the Legislative LGBT Caucus. "Governor Davis has done more for civil rights causes and California's LGBT community than any other governor in California history."

Under this bill, registered domestic partners will have the legal protections and responsibilities that guide couples through nearly every complex legal situation faced by families. These laws regulates such diverse areas as financial support during and after the relationship, community property ownership protections, death, divorce, custody disputes, illness, childbirth, assumption of parenting responsibilities, and adoption.

"Governor Gray Davis has been and will always be a champion for civil rights," added Senator Sheila James Kuehl (D - Santa Monica). "As signed into law, AB 205 will provide crucial protections for children who deserve to have a fully legalized relationship with both of their parents, and deserve to have parents who have a recognized legal relationship to each other."

- CONTINUED NEXT PAGE -

Gov. Davis Approves Historic DP Legislation
Page 2 of 2 - September 20, 2003

"I thank Governor Gray Davis for approving this historic bill," said Assemblymember John Laird (D - Santa Cruz). "AB 205 is affirming positive commitments and relationships and stability that exist across California. This is catching up government with where the people of California are both in opinion and practice. It is a fair and just measure."

"I salute Governor Gray Davis in signing AB 205 into law," stated Assemblymember Mark Leno. " This bill is an important legislation that encourages people to love one another, to settle down, and to form a family. It provides the same benefits and responsibilities that we can provide under state law."

AB 205 is sponsored by Equality California. They worked with Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the two organizations that principally drafted and provided legal expertise on the bill.

The California Legislative LGBT Caucus was originally formed in June 2002. The members include Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Christine Kehoe, the Caucus chair, Senator Sheila James Kuehl, and Assemblymembers Jackie Goldberg, John Laird, and Mark Leno. The caucus' role is to present a forum for the California Legislature to discuss issues that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Californians and to further the goal of equality and justice for all Californians. The LGBT Caucus' formation made California the first state in the country to recognize an official caucus of openly-LGBT state legislators.

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